

**Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001
Environmental Assessment
South River Field Office
EA # OR-105-01-01**

Prepared: December 27, 2002

**Angel Hair Commercial Thinning
Decision Documentation**

Decision:

It is my decision to offer Angel Hair Commercial Thinning, partially implementing Alternative 2 of the Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001 project, as described in the EA (p. 4-9). This decision authorizes the commercial thinning of units B, C and E of the Angel Hair project, located in Sections 31 and 32 of T. 29 S., R. 8 W., W.M., and Section 5 of T. 30 S., R. 8 W. (maps attached). Any decisions to authorize thinning of the remainder of the units comprising the Angel Hair project, or other projects described in the EA are deferred to the future.

The configuration of the units offered for sale may differ slightly from those illustrated in the maps contained in Appendix A of the EA. For the purpose of analysis, prospective unit boundaries were designated based on stand composition and age. Minor adjustments to the final boundaries and changes in acreage may have occurred as a consequence of wildlife and botany surveys, or refinements made during layout. The final location and length of roads to be constructed may also vary slightly. These adjustments and changes, if any, are within the scope of the original proposal and do not constitute effects beyond those discussed in the EA.

Approximately 90 acres of thinning are authorized within the General Forest Management Area and Connectivity/Diversity Block land use allocations. The thinning will yield an estimated 1,539 MBF of timber, equivalent to 2,890 CCF toward the annual allowable sale quantity (ASQ) for the Roseburg District. Density management on approximately 3 acres of Riparian Reserves will yield approximately 54 MBF, equivalent to 152 CCF. This volume is not chargeable toward the ASQ. It is anticipated that there will be some additional volume modified into the sale as a result of the cutting individual trees for tailholds and guyline anchors, to clear yarding corridors, or to provide safe working space at landings.

Access will be provided by existing roads, permanent road construction and renovation of an existing non-system road. There will be 0.02 miles of permanent construction, designated as Road No. 30-8-5.3 (identified as RE-1 in Unit E of the Angel Hair project). Two segments of an existing non-system road, totaling 0.52 miles, will be renovated to provide temporary access to Units B and C. Road renovation will necessitate the removal of trees from approximately 1 acre of right-of-way. Following use, these temporary spurs will be subsoiled and blocked by BLM road maintenance personnel.

Surveys were conducted for those Special Status and Special Attention botanical species identified in the EA (p. 20), with negative results. There are no Survey and Manage wildlife species which require special management consideration or provisions. Following completion of the 2001 Species Review for Survey and Manage, the additional information accumulated led to a determination that pre-disturbance surveys for the red tree vole were no longer required within the central portion of the species distribution range, an area that incorporates the Roseburg District. It was determined that the project area does not contain suitable habitat for the great gray owl or the Oregon shoulderband snail, and thinning will not constitute habitat disturbance.

In order to reduce the likelihood of introduction or spread of noxious weeds into the project area, contract provisions will require that with the exception of logging trucks, all logging equipment and road construction equipment be pressure washed or steam cleaned prior to being moved into the sale area, or at any time when the equipment is removed from the area and later returned.

The project area is located within the natural range of Port-Orford-cedar. While Port-Orford-cedar trees have been observed in other units described in the Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001 EA, there are none within this thinning sale or along any roads designated for timber hauling. As a consequence, no special measures are considered necessary to address the potential spread of Port-Orford-cedar root disease. Regardless, other measures described in the EA (p. 36-37) will be implemented, including the sanitization of any water drawn from sources in the project area for use in road construction and dust abatement, limiting road work to the dry season, limiting hauling on unsurfaced roads to the dry season (May 15th to October 15th), and decommissioning and blocking unsurfaced roads upon completion of the thinning.

Rationale for the Decision:

This decision is based upon the following: The Roseburg District *Record of Decision/Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP 1995) identifies the need for commercial thinning of stands less than 80 years of age to assure high levels of volume productivity (p. 151). Alternative 2, the proposed alternative, will achieve this objective, whereas, Alternative 1 would not.

Comments on this analysis were received from three organizations and one State governmental agency. These comments were considered in the preparation of this decision. None of the comments identified issues or concerns which were pertinent to the action being authorized by this decision. None of the comments constituted information not already considered and addressed in the EA, or new information that would change the conclusions of the analysis.

The three units authorized for thinning provide dispersal habitat for the northern spotted owl, but do not provide nesting habitat. None of the units are within ¼-mile of any owl activity centers. As a consequence, the BLM has made a determination of “may affect, not likely to adversely affect” for habitat modification, and “No Effect” for disturbance.

Unit E is located within designated Critical Habitat Unit OR-62. Thinning will modify habitat conditions for the short term by reducing canopy closure, but canopy closure will remain above 40 percent and return to pre-thinning levels in 10-15 years. A determination of “may affect, not

likely to adversely affect” was made, in that the effects of thinning are not likely to preclude the use of the stands for owl dispersal, nor interfere with the intended function of the Critical Habitat Unit (EA, pp. 39-40).

The project area is located within the 35-50 mile management zone for the marbled murrelet. No suitable murrelet nesting habitat was identified within or adjacent to the three units constituting this commercial thinning sale (EA, Table 10, p. 18), so surveys were not required. Suitable habitat is located within ¼-mile of all 3 units, but was not surveyed. Thinning within ¼-mile of suitable habitat, during the nesting season, could result in disturbance and nest abandonment if murrelets are present. A Daily Operational Restriction will be implemented, consisting of a prohibition on operations from the period two hours before sunset, until two hours following sunrise, during the period between April 1st and August 5th. Application of this restriction will mitigate potential disturbance, resulting in a determination of “may affect, not likely to adversely affect” disturbance. A determination of “No Effect” was made in relation to habitat modification, since no nesting habitat is present within or adjacent to the units authorized for thinning.

The BLM has conferred with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on these determinations and has received a Letter of Concurrence (1-15-03-I-98), dated December 27, 2002. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also agreed that thinning Unit E in Critical Habitat Unit OR-62 would accelerate the development of late-successional habitat conditions, and further stated that no incidental take of northern spotted owls or marbled murrelets is expected.

There are no threatened or endangered fish species in the project area that are listed under the Endangered Species Act. Essential Fish Habitat is located between 8 and 9 miles downstream of the sale area, behind natural barriers to passage by anadromous fish and would not be affected.

Compliance and Monitoring:

Monitoring will be done in accordance with provisions contained in the ROD/RMP, Appendix I (p. 84, 190, 193, & 195-199). Monitoring efforts will be directed toward these resources: Riparian Reserves; Matrix; Water and Soils; Wildlife Habitat; Fish Habitat; and Special Status and SEIS Special Attention Species Habitat.

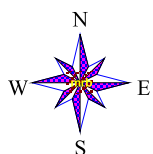
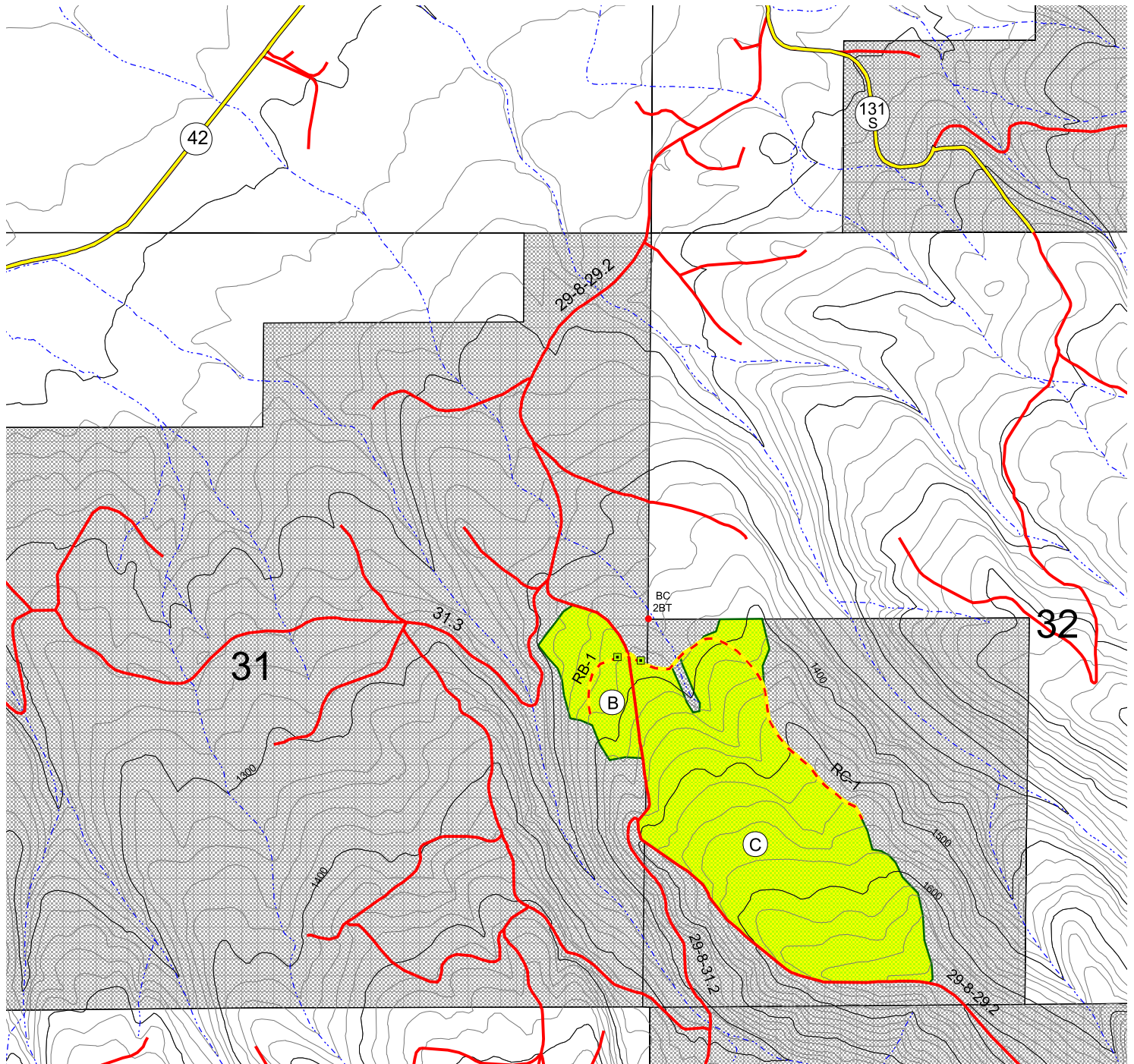
Protest and Appeals Procedures: As outlined in 43 CFR § 5003 - Administrative Remedies at § 5003.3 (a) and (b), protests may be made within 15 days of the publication date of the notice of sale in the Roseburg, Oregon *News Review*. Protests shall be filed with the authorized officer and contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision.

E. Dwight Fielder
Field Manager
South River Field Office

Date

ANGEL HAIR

Commercial Thinning



T29,30S, R8W

Willamette Meridian, Douglas Co., OR.

1000 0 1000 Feet

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of this data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data was compiled from various sources. This information may be updated without notification.

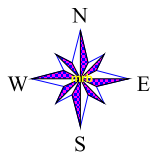
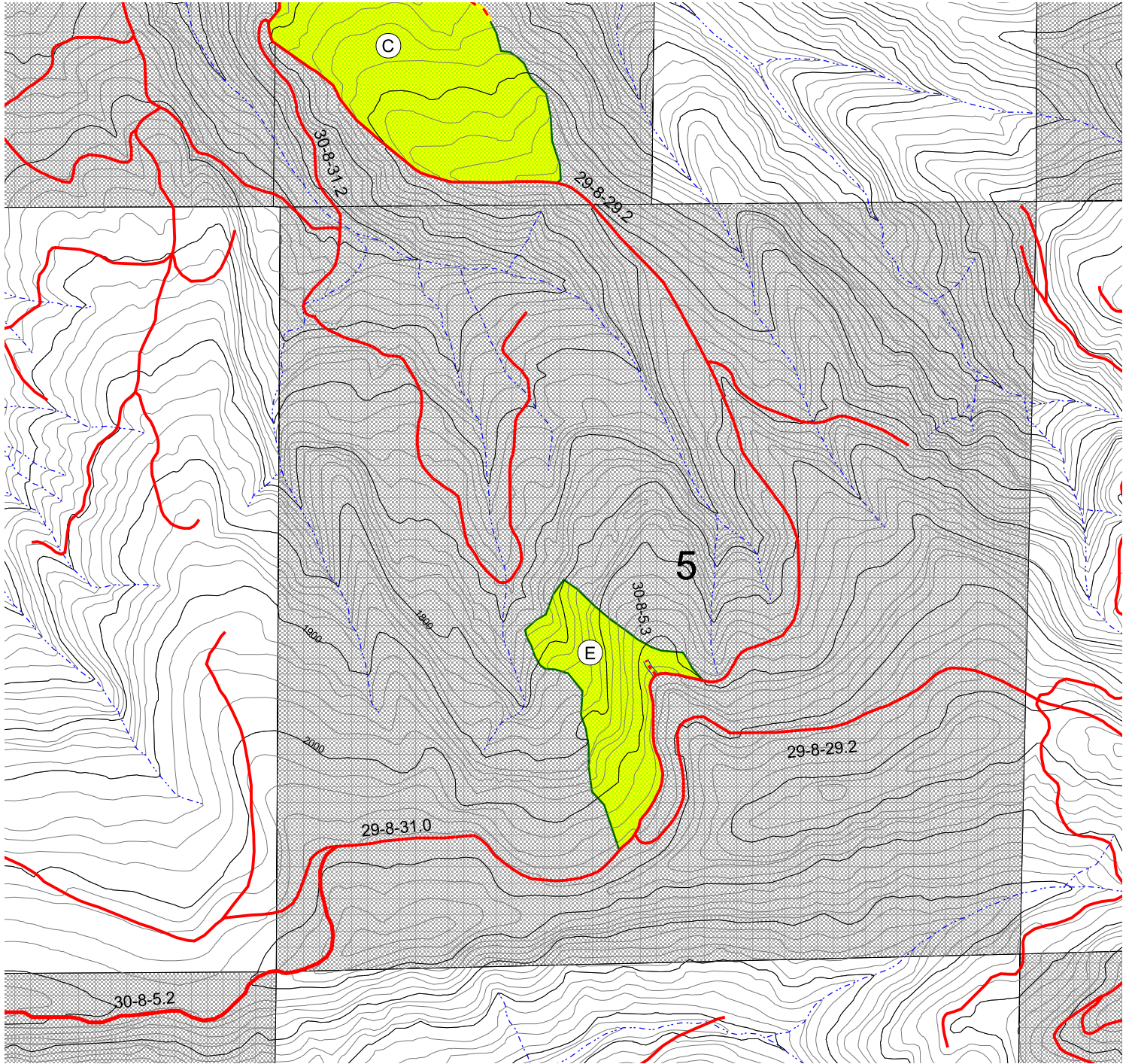


- Construct Roadblock
- Renovate, Decommission
- County Highway
- Existing Road
- 100' Contour
- 20' Contour
- Stream

- Thinning Area
- BLM (O&C) Land
- Private Land

ANGEL HAIR

Commercial Thinning



T29,30S, R8W

Willamette Meridian, Douglas Co., OR.

1000 0 1000 Feet

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- Existing Road
- Renovate, Decommission
- Construct, Permanent/Rock
- 100' Contour
- 20' Contour
- Stream

- Thinning Area
- BLM (O&C) Land
- Private Land